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TAGS: IR IZ IS SY PHUM PREL PGOV PO

SUBJECT: NEW POLICIES NEEDED FOR KOSOVO AND LEBANON; OTHER PORTUGUESE VIEWS FOR MAY 26-27 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING (GAERC)

REF: SECSTATE 54639

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon  
Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Portuguese MFA's Deputy EU Correspondent reported that the EU ministers needed to quickly develop an alternative strategy for the mission transition in Kosovo to avoid a gap between the UN and EU forces. She added that Portugal was in "no rush" to recognize Kosovo at this point despite ongoing international pressure. On Lebanon, she stated that the situation in Lebanon is "a disaster," and predicted that the ministers would have to hash out a new policy so the EU could interact with a new coalition government. Although it was not on the original agenda, Rocha mentioned that EU observer support for Zimbabwe would be discussed during the meeting and the FM's Chief of Staff separately said the GAERC lunch would discuss closing GTMO (see septel). End summary.

¶2. (C) Western Balkans: The Portuguese MFA's Deputy EU Correspondent, Ana Filomena Rocha acknowledged that Serbia was moving in the right direction but stressed that its pro-EU focus was not yet solid. Portugal hopes that positive encouragement will help maintain Serbia's positive momentum. On Kosovo, the ministers will discuss next steps for the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) given the EU's lack of success thus far in planning the UN to EU mission hand-off. Rocha said the ministers would have to quickly come up with a "plan B" to facilitate the EULEX transition's logistics and avoid a potentially disastrous gap between the missions. She further mentioned that France was actively pressuring nations that have not recognized Kosovo to do so, but stressed that Portugal is in no rush.

¶3. (C) Iraq: The ministers will coordinate the EU message for the upcoming May 29 International Compact meeting in Stockholm. Rocha said Member States agreed that it was time to press the Iraqis to improve security, national reconciliation efforts, and human rights protections.

¶4. (C) Lebanon/Syria: Rocha declared Hizballah's violence "a disaster" and said the EU had to consider the new political, economic, and assistance ramifications over a lunch discussion.

¶5. (U) Iran: Rocha said Iran would not be discussed at the GAERC.

¶6. (C) Afghanistan: Portugal is not considering the Paris conference a pledge conference, according to Rocha, but rather an opportunity to press Afghanistan on good governance and counternarcotics programs. She added that many EU states were increasingly concerned about the tribal violence that is being tacitly allowed by Afghani officials in Kabul.

¶7. (SBU) Somalia: The EU is actively backing UN attempts to respond to Somalia's piracy issue due to the potential damage it could wreck on the already fragile situation. Rocha noted

that the EU would consider offering financial assistance to anti-piracy efforts once the UN measures were approved.

¶ 18. (C) Georgia: Portugal does not believe it is the time to implement additional measures as suggested in reftel just yet. Rocha explained that any EU action during the UN investigation would undermine the UN efforts, upset Russia, and inflame the Georgia-Russia situation generally. She added that Portugal hopes that the elections avoid violence and wide-spread charges of fraud, which could spark further tensions.

¶ 19. (C) Zimbabwe: The EU is attempting to work with SADC members to encourage an observer mission for the second round of elections. Rocha said the EU is willing to back the SADC missions rather than requesting additional EU missions. She said Portugal felt it unlikely that Zimbabwe would accept and said Portugal was therefore against having the EU offer observers at all.

¶ 10. (C) Comment: Although Portugal is willing to take public stands on Afghanistan and Iraq, it appears wary of doing anything to upset Russia. Rocha's reports on Georgia, Kosovo, and Serbia all show that Portugal tends to leave potentially sensitive issues involving Russia up to the United Nations where possible. End comment.

Stephenson